

**Applicant:** Kerry Charles Broad  
**Application No.:** 10/656,644

### IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A collapsible handrail mechanism for steps or a ladder, including:

an outer stringer and an inner stringer jointly pivotable about a pivot point;

a stanchion located between the outer and inner stringers and pivotally mounted to at least one of the stringers;

a latching mechanism through which the stanchion passes and to which at least one of the stringers is pivotally mounted at the pivot point;

the latching mechanism having a slide plate that prevents substantial downwards movement of the stanchion, a top plate ~~preventing~~ that prevents substantial upwards movement of the stanchion, and a side plate preventing substantial sideways movement of the stanchion;

wherein, in operation of the handrail mechanism from a stowed position, when the stringers are lowered-- the stanchion is thereby forced to slide on the slide plate causing the stanchion to pivot about ~~its~~ the stanchion's mounting up into an operational position.

2. (Previously presented) The collapsible handrail of claim 1, wherein the stanchion is pivotally mounted for rotation in a single plane.